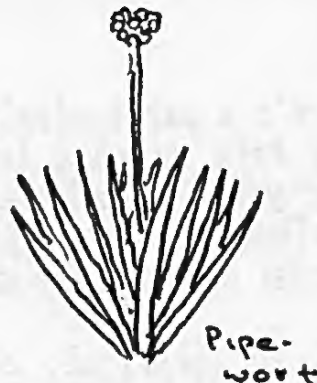


# CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

June 1993

#190 Vol 17.5



Pipe-  
wort

## A SHORT BUSHWALK AT TRENTHAM 26-3-93

I left my car in the bush where Old Blue Mount Road peters out into a bush track.

Recorded having seen nearby a flock of well over fifty Sulphur-crested Cockatoos with not one Long-billed Corella amongst them. Having heard a Pied Currawong nearby I crossed the boggy flat and turned right into the bush.

Noticing across my path a line of shredded wood-wool such as only a violent lightning strike could produce, I looked around expecting to see a shattered tree nearby. Puzzled, I followed the shredded wood-pulp about 30 metres to the far side of a big (maybe one metre in diameter) Messmate Stringybark tree. There, right at its base, a small part of the trunk was dead wood, a partly overgrown old stump. Assuming the lightning strike comes from the ground, it had for some reason followed up a root to this dead (but *not* dry) part of the tree. From there upwards in a gradual spiral of 1-1½ turns around the tree, the lightning had demonstrated its awesome power. Like a tractor-drawn ripper in hard ground, it had pulverised this furrow to the top of the tree, which appeared to be still green and growing. The explosive force of its passing, (whether upwards or downwards) had hurled the shredded wood-wool up to thirty metres from the trunk in a complete circle.

To be able to locate the spot again I counted my paces south from the tree to the old metalled Domino Road that runs from the Blackwood Road, straight through to Lyonville. About 250 paces brought me to the road just where it is joined by the unmade part of the old Blue Mount Road.

Near there is where I found several tiny white orchids, each having only two white "petals" in evidence. Using "Australian Terrestrial Orchids" (C & D Woolcock) I later identified them as Parsons Bands (*Eriochilus cuculatus*).

In a bush dam nearby, an apparently thriving population of frogs were adding their bird-like calls to those of a Grey Shrike-thrush and a White-eared Honeyeater.

As I walked west along Domino Road less than a kilometre to another bush track, I heard a Yellow Robin and the distinctive calls of a Grey Currawong and a White-throated Treecreeper.

There's a particularly handsome gum tree, left of the road, opposite the only farm on this long straight bush road, so I picked a sprig of the grey-green gum-tips from nearby, hoping to find an answer to my puzzlement - are these splendid "White Gums" Candlebarks (*Eucalyptus rubida*) or are they Mountain Grey Gums (*E. cypellocarpa*)?

As I turned right, onto the track to the mining venture of maybe five years ago, I noticed that another lightning-struck tree, that I'd seen over a year ago, is still alive and well. The lightning had struck it on one side only, hurling out huge splinters or spears of wood, instead of wood-pulp, up to about four metres long.

Near there the Austral Bluebells were still blossoming freely, and a little further on a handsome Golden-tip Bush-pea (*Goodia lotifolia*) was almost covered with red-brown, ripe seed pods. One of the most beautiful flowering shrubs of these damp eucalypt forests, they are uncharacteristically numerous beside the bush track that gives vehicle access to Blue Mount, only a few miles from Trentham. Here too I had a quick look at a White-browed Scrubwren.

Beside the lake that had not so many years ago been used for mechanically washing the gravels for gold and gemstones, I recognised an old friend from Tasmanian bushwalking days - the Tasman Flax-lily (*Dianella tasmanica*). I wondered was it the birds or was it the Eastern Grey Kangaroos (of which I saw a pair nearby) that had eaten all except one of the brilliant purple berries.

As I took a short cut across the farmland towards where I had left my car, I spied two demurely dressed Superb Fairy Wrens in the large bracken patch. Under a pine tree were several brilliantly orange-coloured fungi with white polka dots and whitish gills. Two large mushrooms grew under a nearby Messmate tree. I can always recognise them by smell, but I left them there as I had no billy or basket to carry them through the bush back to the car.

Saw another pair of 'roos near the bush fence and two more in the swampy bushland later, nearly back to the car.

Another couple of plants to be identified that night were a stunted *Banksia marginata* with just a few pale yellow flowers, and a *Leptospermum juniperinum*. The latter I had known as Prickly Tea-tree in the bush below our home at nearby Little Hampton - over 60 years ago.

My friend Kayle of Hepburn who knows this bushland well has since convinced me that the beautiful gum trees here are all Candlebarks. Mountain Grey Gums don't occur "north of the divide".

Stan Bruton.

## BIRD LIST FOR SEWAGE FARM

The two lists were made by P West on successive days. The first was from 4.30-5.00 pm on Saturday 24 April, and the second from 7.00-9.00 am on the following day. It is interesting to compare the lists

Hoary-headed Grebe	x	5	Eastern Rosella		2
Little Grebe	x	3	Swift Parrot	c12 fo	
White-faced Heron		3	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	1	
Little Pied Cormorant		1	Corella sp		40 fo
Grey Teal	x	20	Galah		2
Black Duck		12	Kookaburra		2
Chestnut Teal		2f	Welcome Swallow		80+
Wood Duck	x		Flame Robin		2 m
Musk duck	xf	1f	Superb Fairy Wren	x	h
Pink-eared Duck	2		Golden-headed Cisticola		1 nbp
White-eyed Duck	1f	1f	Spotted Pardalote		h
Australian Shoveller		1f	Striated Pardalote		1
Black-shouldered Kite	1		Goldfinch		c6
Coot	x	20	Starling		200+
Dusky Moorhen	x	25+	Magpie lark		2
Purple Swamphen	x	6	Magpie		6
Masked lapwing	2		Little Raven		4
Black-fronted Plover	x		Australian Raven	x	3
Silver Gull		2			

(c= approximately, f = female, h = heard only, m = male, nbp = non-breeding plumage, species count = maximum seen in one count, fo = flying over, x = recorded. Total of Grebe seen on the second day was 20, but non-breeding plumage made positive identification difficult.

## OBSERVATIONS

**CRESCENT HONEYEATER** has seen in Wheeler Street, in the company of a Yellow-winged Honeyeater. It was first recognised by its call, and then by a clear observation. (GB). This is the first record for the Club's bird list.

**BLACK-CHINNED HONEYEATER** was seen at Terrick Terrick on Wed 19 May. (MO)

**THE COMMON MYNAH INVASION.** The May issue of Whirrakee discusses the likely effect of mynahs on the native bird population, and possible methods of control. Recommended reading for all club members.

**EASTERN SPINEBILL** has been seen feeding on a Mexican Sage. (BM)

**WILLIE WAGTAIL** has been seen at the bird bath for the first time. (BM)

**SPOTTED QUAIL-THRUSH** has been seen behind Mt Tarrengower. (KT)



**WHITE COCKATOOS.** Flocks of 200 have been seen at Trentham. About half were Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and half Long-billed Corellas. (SB)

**WEDGE-TAILED EAGLES.** A pair were seen low over the Calder Highway. (MO). One was observed during the May U3A/CFNC outing, soaring low near the corner of Maldon and Muckleford Roads. (EP)

**BLUE-WINGED PARROTS** A flock of 10 has been seen at Little Hampton. (SB)

**GREY-BUTCHER BIRD** has been seen at Kangaroo Flat. (GS) It is remarkable that butcher birds, although found to the north and south of Castlemaine, do not frequent our district.

**7 HONEYEATER SPECIES** were seen on the one day at a Maldon property. They were Black-chinned, Fuscous, Yellow-faced, Yellow-tufted, White-naped, and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, and Eastern Spinebills. (GS)

**BLACK AND WHITE BLACKBIRD** has again been seen along the banks of Barkers Creek, near the east end of Edward Street. (MW).

**NODDING BLUE-LILY** (*Stypandra glauca*) has been seen 5 km east of the Eppalock School. (IH)

**MAGPIES.** 103 were counted feeding on a freshly-burned paddock, on the Muckleford Road. There was a small crest in the paddock, so the total number may well have been greater. Some ravens were also present. (EP)

## **SANDON IN APRIL 1993**

### At the bird bath

Crimson Rosellas	Brown Thornbills	Brown-headed Honeyeaters
Scarlet Robin (adult and immature)	Buff Rumped Thornbills	Yellow-face Honeyeaters
Grey Fantail (pair)	Yellow Thornbills	White-naped Honeyeaters
Willie Wagtail (pair)	Striated Thornbills	Spotted Pardalote
Wrens	Wh-throated Treecreeper (pr)	Silvereye
Speckled Warbler (pair)	White-eared Honeyeaters (pr)	Magpie

### On the property

White-faced Heron	Bl-faced Cuckoo-shrike (pr)	Red Wattlebird
Brown Falcon	Hooded Robin	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Masked Lapwings (3)	Jacky Winter (pr)	Fuscous Honeyeater
Common Bronzewing (pair)	Golden Whistler (im-mature only, 12/4)	White-plumed Honeyeater
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Rufous Whistler	Striated Pardalote
Eastern Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush	Diamond Firetail (pair)
Sthn Boobook Owl (heard)	Weebill	White-winged Choughs
Owlet Nightjar	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Australian Magpie Larks
Kookaburra	Varied Sittella	Grey Currawong
Welcome Swallow		Australian Raven

Susanna Starr.

## THE BARMAH CAMPOUT

This is the early-spring campout of the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association.

The campout will be held at the "Dharnya Centre", 8 km north of Barmah, and about 40 km north-east of Echuca. The building is new and comfortable with 2, 4 or 6 bunks per room, and accommodates 56 people. Cost is \$12 per person per night. Bring your own sheets, blankets, sleeping bag and pillow. People may camp "by the river" at no charge. However, it is recommended that campers use one of the caravan parks at Barmah. Ladies from the Barmah Church group will provide catering; these meals are also available for those who camp. Those arriving on the Friday evening may wish to have a counter tea at the Barmah Hotel.

Wetland Cruise is a "must" for visitors to Barmah Forest. The *Kingfisher* is licensed to carry 29 passengers. Booking by early July is needed. Provided there are 15 passengers, cost will be \$13 per person.

Canoe hire. \$10 per canoe per day, plus deposit. Booking required.

Clothing. Take wet-weather clothing, and gum boots.

Floods. There is usually up to two weeks warning of floods. Alternative arrangements have been made in case of floods, except for accommodation. The camping grounds, Belinda Lodge and Barmah Hotel/Motel will still be available.

Program for the campout is

### Friday 13 August.

7.30 pm Welcome

The Dharnya Centre - Mr Shane Walker, manager of the centre.

The Barmah Forest - Mr Max Moore, ranger.

The Southern Riverina - speaker to be arranged.

10.00 pm Supper.

### Saturday 14 August

9.00 am Kingfisher Wetland Cruises begin. 29 people/cruise. Cost \$13.

9.30 am Mr Horwie Marshall, an amateur botanist and nature lover, who has studied the Barmah forest for 30 years, will be available all day.

9.30 am Bird Watching. The bird list has 204 species.

4.00 pm Return to Dharnya Centre.

5.30 pm Evening meal.

6.30 pm WVFNCA General meeting.

8.00 pm Guest Speakers provided by Southern Riverina FNC.

10.00 pm Supper.

Sunday 15 August

9.30 am Drive Barmah Forest Roads (subject to ground conditions) or walk along tracks - along Murray River or wetlands.  
12.00 BBQ lunch. Dharnya Centre.  
2.00 pm Farewells.

Costs

Registration fee	\$2	Dinner (roast + sweets)	\$10
Supper	\$2	BBQ	\$10
Breakfast (light)	\$5	Accommodation/day	
Breakfast (cooked)	\$8.50	(refundable if flooded)	\$13

Booking sheet, maps, bird list, accommodation list etc are available from E Perkins.

**TERRICK TERRICK BIRD LIST**

Australian Pelican (fo)	Southern Boobook	Weebill
Pacific Heron	Australian Owlet-nightjar	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
White-faced Heron	Kookaburra	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Straw-necked Ibis (fo)	Sacred Kingfisher	Yellow Thornbill
Australian Shelduck	Rainbow Bee-eater	Southern Whiteface
Pacific Black Duck	White-backed Swallow	Varied Sittella
Black-shouldered Kite	Welcome Swallow	Brown Treecreeper
Whistling Kite	Tree Martin	Noisy Miner
Brown Goshawk	Fairy Martin	White-plumed Honeyeater
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Black-chinned Honeyeater
Little Eagle	Red-capped Robin	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Spotted Harrier	Hooded Robin	White-fronted Chat
Marsh Harrier	Eastern Yellow Robin	Mistletoe Bird
Peregrine Falcon	Jacky Winter	Spotted Pardalote
Brown Falcon	Crested Shrike-tit	Striated Pardalote
Australian Kestrel	Gilbert's Whistler	European Goldfinch
Peaceful Dove	Golden Whistler	Diamond Firetail
Common Bronzewing	Rufous Whistler	Common Starling
Crested Pigeon	Grey Shrikethrush	Olive-backed Oriole
Galah	Restless Flycatcher	White-winged Chough
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Fantail	Australian Magpie Lark
Eastern Rosella	Willie Wagtail	Dusky Woodswallow
Mallee Ringneck	White-browed Babbler	Grey Butcherbird
Red-rumped Parrot	Rufous Songlark	Magpie
Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo	Superb Fairy Wren	Australian Raven

The list has been obtained from a variety of sources. Additions welcomed.  
fo = flying over.



## ADDITIONS TO THE PLANT LIST

### COMMON PIPEWORT (*Eriocaulon scariosum*).

This has been a most exciting find. It is not often that we get a completely new native family to add to the plant list. Common Pipewort is a small swamp plant, and was found growing on the slopes of Mt Alexander by Ian Higgins. It grows to a height of about 10 cm, and has globular flower-heads arising from a cluster of green, grass-like leaves. The flower-heads are quite beautiful when examined under low magnification, with delicately fringed perianth segments. Pipeworts are members of the Eriocauliaceae family

This is also a new record for the North-central Study Area. The distribution (from Willis vol 1) is e.g. Ruffy, Gooram, Strathbogie, Euroa, Warby Range, Myrtleford, Beechworth, Upper Murray R., Benambra Ck, with an isolated occurrence at Fernbank in Gippsland.

### Twig-rush (*Baumea* sp, syn *Cladium* sp).

Twig-rush was also found by Ian Higgins, also growing on the slopes of Mt Alexander. Twig-rush has long, bright-green rush-like leaves. The leaves are slightly flattened. Although there is a dense stand of twig-rush in the area, no flowers were found, making positive identification difficult. David Albrecht (National Herbarium) wrote "The rush is either *Baumea rubiginosa* or *B. arthropphylla*. They are very similar vegetatively (and also frequently shy flowerers) and I require nuts to distinguish them".

### COMMON LOVE-GRASS (*Eragrostis elongata*)

This grass was also found by Ian Higgins in the vicinity of Sutton Grange. It is distinguished from the more locally common *E. brownii* by the fewer stamens per flower (2 rather than 3), and by the more contracted and congested flower clusters. The specimen found had a more bluish leaf colour than *E. brownii*.

---

**Meetings:** Second Friday of each month (Jan excepted) at Castlemaine High School at 8.00 p.m. Business meetings on the fourth Thursday (Dec excepted) at 7.30 p.m. All members are invited to attend.

**Subscriptions 1993** Subscriptions were due in February.

Single \$12, Family \$18, Student/pensioner \$8, Supporting member \$20  
Newsletter posted: subscription plus \$6.

**Committee:** B Maund (Pres), B Envall (VP), M Oliver (Sec), G Broadway (Treas), K Turner (Prog), R Mills (PO & asst N/L), E. Perkins (N/L ed), S Parnaby, C Morris and K Meehan.

---

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club inc. PO Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

## **CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM**

Excursions leave promptly at the times indicated.

**Fri 11 June. ECOLOGY OF BOX-IRONBARK WOODLAND.** Speaker is Doug Robinson. High School at 8.00 pm.

**Sat 12 June. HILLTOP, GUILDFORD and SHICER GULLY.** 1.30 pm at SEC, Mostyn St. Leader: K Turner. Take your binoculars.

**Thurs 17 June. BIRDWATCHING.** Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: K Turner.

**Thurs 24 June. BUSINESS MEETING.** 7.30 pm at 38 Campbell St.

**Fri 9 July. WADERS OF AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS.** Speaker is Mark Barter. 8 pm at High School.

**Sat 10 July. WINTER WATERBIRDS.** Excursion.

**Thurs 15 July. BIRDWATCHING.** Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: M Oliver.

**Fri Aug 13. ISLANDS - how the animals and plants got there. J and M. CALDER.** 8.00 pm at High School.

**Aug 13-15 BARMAH CAMPOUT.** Meeting of WVFNCA at Dharya Centre, Barmah. See separate notice about the campout.

**Sat 11 Sept. BOCA bus trip to Maldon.**

**Fri 8 Oct. PAT BINGHAM "BIRD HABITAT - HOW YOU KNOW YOU HAVE GOT IT".** High School at 8.00 pm.

**Sat 9 Oct. FERNYHURST.** To be confirmed.

**Sun 17 Oct. TARNAGULLA WILDLLOWERS.** Excursion with Maryborough FNC. All day trip. Take lunch.

**21-26 Oct CAE KANGAROO ISLAND TOUR** Tutor is Jane Calder. Cost \$1095. Brochure is available from E Perkins.

**Fri 12 Nov. ROB WATKINS "NATURAL HISTORY IN THE EYES OF A PHOTOGRAPHER"** High School at 8.00 pm.

**Sat 13 Nov. TERRICK TERRICK.** Leave 27 Doveton St at 9.30 am.

**Sat 11 Dec. TRENTHAM** all day excursion. Leader S. Bruton.